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he is to be congratulated upon his success. Such work as he has done is of no slight importance in connection with a question whose ultimate solution is dependent upon the extent and accuracy of popular information in regard to it.

FREDERIC BANCROFT.

Recueil des Inscriptions Juridiques Grecques: Texte, Traduction, Commentaire. Par R. DARESTE, B. HAUSOULLIER, TH. REINACH. Premier fascicule. Paris, E. Leroux, 1891.

Though the French have distinguished themselves by scholarly and critical treatment of large numbers of Greek inscriptions, and have discovered and published perhaps more than the Germans during the past fifteen years, yet (except in the case of the older Le Bas-Waddington collection) they have left to the Germans the gathering of these inscriptions into systematic collections containing the best critical texts. The publication to which attention is here called marks a departure from this habit, but in a limited way and in a limited field. It is to consist of three parts, of which the first lies before us. It confines itself to the sphere of juridical inscriptions, and within this sphere to such as are most important and most instructive for the end in view. This end is not primarily that of the epigraphist. The epigraphist may and will benefit by its results; but the collection is especially prepared for the student of jurisprudence who wishes to pursue his researches in the domain of antiquity beyond the limits of Roman law, and may otherwise be repelled by insufficient knowledge of Greek or by the difficulties of the subject matter or of the dialects. The editors have rightly believed that the inscriptions themselves are well worthy of the attention of the jurisconsult, and that to be widely studied they need only to be made accessible. To attain this purpose they have given a carefully edited text, embodying the labors of previous editors and their own; and to this they have added a translation, expressed in language at once precise and juristic, and besides this a commentary upon the most important facts of the inscription. The work is therefore eminently practical and eminently useful and is to be heartily recommended to the student of law or of antiquities. Several of the inscriptions selected for the volume embody some of the most difficult legal questions presented by antiquity.

The varied contents of the fascicule may be seen from the following summary: No. 1, Halicarnassus, law regulating the re-acquisition of confiscated property by *émigrés*; No. 2, Ceos, relating to funerals; No. 3, Gambreon, on mourning; No. 4, Ephesus, on the abolition of debts during the Mithridatic war; No. 5, likewise from Ephesus, relating to mortgages at the close of the war; No. 6, Myconos, regis-

tration of dowers; No. 7, Tenos, registration of sales of real estate; No. 8, a complete *corpus* of mortgage inscriptions on boundary stones, sixty-eight in number, from Attica, Lemnos, Amorgos, Syros, Naxos; No. 9, Eretria, contract for draining a marsh; No. 10, Cnidos, judgment rendered by Cnidos in favor of Calymna. Each of these inscriptions gives occasion for a considerable treatise upon the subjects contained in them. Especially valuable are those on dower and mortgage. The names of the editors are a sufficient guarantee for accuracy in their work. M. Dareste in particular is widely known as a high authority on legal antiquities and as a frequent contributor to periodicals of articles upon the inscriptions published in this collection. It is very appropriate that the most important of these should be gathered into a single volume where they can be studied together and in continuity.

A. C. MERRIAM.

The Origin of Property in Land. By FUSTEL DE COULANGES.

Edited by W. J. ASHLEY, M.A. London, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1891.—xlviii, 153 pp.

This work is a translation of Fustel de Coulanges's able argument against communal holding of land, which appeared in the *Revue des Questions Historiques* nearly three years ago. The character of the essay hardly justifies the title; for we have not here a discussion of how property originated, but an *ex parte* argument to show that the opinions of Maurer, Viollet, Mommsen, Laveleye and Jubainville, who support the existence of an original agrarian community, are without historical foundation. M. Fustel's title was *Le Problème des Origines de la Propriété Foncière*, but we have still to wait for a work which, with no theory to defend, shall present the views of the various scholars who have discussed, from one side or the other, this important subject. Aside, however, from its inadequacy in this direction, this book will serve a most useful purpose in causing students and readers to stop and think a little more about the subject, particularly as presented in such a superficial work as that of Laveleye; for here M. Fustel's criticism seems wholly justifiable. Furthermore, in presenting to us in compact form the method which he pursued in his examination of mediæval institutions, M. Fustel has revived one feature of historical method which seemed to be suffering neglect, *viz.* critical, accurate observation. But at the same time the book contains all the faults of that method—too close adherence to the interpretation of text, a tendency to slur over evidence which opposes the author's theory, to interpret all evidence in its favor and to slight his opponents, whether by speaking of them in uncomplimentary terms, by misrepresenting them or by neglecting them altogether, and finally a practical avoidance of the comparative method.